

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are all the claims pending in the application. Reconsideration and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 4-6 and 13-15 under §112, 2nd paragraph, as indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner asserted that the term “interpolated” is not idiomatic English as used in the claims. Accordingly, Applicants have amended this term to --input-- as suggested by the Examiner. The amendments to these claims were made merely to more accurately claim the present invention, do not narrow the literal scope of the claims, and thus do not implicate an estoppel in the application of the doctrine of equivalents.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. § 102

- The Examiner rejected claims 10-12 under §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 08-300227 to Saito et al. (hereinafter Saito). The Examiner suggested amendments to the claims that would overcome this rejection. Accordingly, to expedite prosecution of this application, Applicants have amended the claims in a manner consistent with that suggested by the Examiner. Thus, this rejection is believed to have been overcome.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. § 103

- The Examiner rejected claims 13-15 under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito and further in view of JP 6-246542 to Mori or JP 63-210280 to Inoue or US Patent 6,086,684 to Saito et al.
- The Examiner rejected claims 16-18 under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito, and further in view of JP 10-225824 to Kagaku et al., JP 10-512 to Saito et al., or JP 5-216,624 to Toshiba Tungaloy Co.

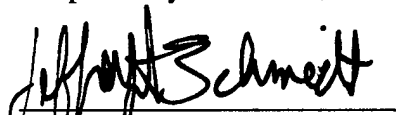
In light of the above response to the rejection based on Saito, these rejections are now believed to be moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw these rejections, and pass this application to issue.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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